

# Henryville offenders' program helps communities save dollars

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Commissioner J. David Donahue

The Henryville Correctional Facility, located in Clark County, has increased the number of its work crews to provide assistance to state, county and local municipalities.

In 2005, the facility began with five crews and now has expanded to 18 crews due to an increase in demand.

Crews provide a variety of services to the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), local cities and not-for-profit organizations. These non-violent offender work crews complete tasks that would otherwise not get accomplished or fall low on communities' priority lists.

The City of Scottsburg has contracted with the facility for over two years, paying under \$40,000 per year to have a crew designated for use in the city's parks, Street Department and other areas on a daily basis. Savings for the city has been reckoned at \$142,000, well over twice that cost per year.

The cost of the city's contract pays the salary of the crew's supervisory staff, while allowing Scottsburg access to skilled and unskilled personnel who have painted and repaired the interior and exterior of city buildings and beautified city parks by cutting grass, weed eating, planting flowers and picking up trash as well as performing seasonal jobs. Ballfields are in better shape because of the number of hands available to tackle tasks that enhance the facilities' appearance and keep repairs current.

"This is a win-win situation for all. Work crews reduce offender idleness, provide resources for task completion, and result in positive partnerships between the community and corrections," said Commissioner J. David Donahue.

"The offender crews provide an opportunity to give back to the community as well as instilling a strong work ethic and job skills essential to a successful release," said Facility Superintendent Jan Davis.

Sam Haley with the Seymour INDOT District, boasted of the significant cost savings for taxpayers and increase in productivity because of the contributions of the work crews.

Gary R. Woods, Director of City Services, Charlestown, said, "The offender crews have allowed city staff to concentrate on special projects while not shorting our daily routine."

Henryville Correctional Facility provides work crews to five DNR locations in three counties. Having offenders at the Vallonia Tree Nursery located in Jackson County impacts that division with a cost savings of \$1,100 per day. The crew allows the State of Indiana to provide inexpensive planting stock for the reforestation of land in the state. Without this assistance, the cost of the seedlings would be prohibitive for a significant number of conservation efforts.

Tom Bricker, Property Manager of Dream Lake State Recreation Area in Clark County, said that crews have done a tremendous job and with a high quality of work. The underbrush cleared between the campsites and lake has allowed an increased rent ability and raised the popularity of the campgrounds. The clearing of tornado damaged picnic grounds has made those areas safer for the public.

Henryville Correctional Facility has also been active in Habitat for Humanity, Goodwill and other not-for-profit organizations. A total of 230,578 man hours were provided by Henryville offender crews during 2006.

The Henryville Correctional Facility employs 42 employees and houses up to 200 male adult felons. The facility is located in the Clark State Forest near Henryville.

### **About The Department of Correction**

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.